



Celebrating the Family Friendly Partners Network Experience

Congregational leaders from the **Nebraska** Family Friendly Partners Network shared, at the end of Event 8, ways the FFPN helped their church and church families. They also shared events or activities their church had started because of their involvement as a Nebraska Family Friendly Partners Network congregation. Below are the compiled results.

FFPN Impact on Churches and Their Families

The Family Friendly Partners Network primarily impacted Nebraska churches and their families in the areas of:

- ‡ Philosophy of ministry
- ‡ Family friendly programming and resources
- ‡ Recognizing the needs of families

‡ Philosophy of Ministry ‡

The Family Friendly Partners Network helped my church shift its philosophy of ministry...

- To recognize the need to become family-centered, not family-supported and then find the tools and support to do this
- Realize the important place of the parents' role in shaping the faith of their children
- Become aware of the paradigm shift and the need for families to nurture faith in the home
- Change attitudes as to family responsibility in faith development
- Seek to equip, empower, and encourage parents
- Helped us focus on eternity—getting kids home
- Realize the culture that we've been living in and where God wants our church culture to go
- Change the language/focus/goals--starting to break old way traditions
- Helped us to look at our church as a body of believers rather than a building or just a place to worship
- We hope the older folks are beginning to realize and understand the world their younger families are dealing with and begin to be willing to support them at church

The Family Friendly Partners Network helped our church families...

- Think about their ministry to their kids
- By placing them in their true responsibility as parents and children as described in God's Word
- Become more home-centered, church supported with their faith
- To have a common goal
- Appreciate the need to be intentional at home in sharing and talking about their faith
- Become more confident in faith training in the home
- Realize the church will help them, but the responsibility for faith building is theirs.
- Realize more responsibility for the religious education of their children, i.e. they attend mid-week classes with their children.
- Become more loving
- To see how Godly parents have passed on their faith from generations past
- Recognize how important their input is to the church

‡ Family Friendly Programming and Resources ‡

The Family Friendly Partners Network equipped my church with family friendly programming and resources...

- Start lasting programs that will support our families
- Involve more people in different areas of ministry
- Re-focus on family worship
- Improve community outreach
- Reflect upon and examine themselves and their ministry with and to families
- Think more about helping parents (families) build faith moments
- Get more resources to help parents
- Implemented many programs for others to benefit from on a variety of topics

The Family Friendly Partners Network helped our church families...

- Have specific implementable ideas to put into action from the family ministry perspective: Family Time, Faith Talk Cards
- By offering events and activities to promote families
- Young parents are "plugging" into Sunday School, VBS, and children events recognizing their need to be involved
- Have many more resources available to families to help with devotions, etc. --just passing on the faith made easier
- Placed tools and resources into parents' hands to help them share faith at home
- Connect and form new relationships through new programs

- To get resources to become the Christian parents they are called by God to be.
- Get resources for sex education
- By encouraging more family studies in scripture
- Giving opportunities to become involved in church leadership

✠ Recognizing the Needs of Families ✠

The Family Friendly Partners Network helped my church recognize the needs of families in our congregation...

- Be aware and sensitive to family needs in our congregation
- To recognize the needs of families at various stages of life and to give families a “fun” way to enjoy do-votions
- Better understand others
- Be more connected, more understanding
- Begin asking right questions in order to get right answers
- Improved skills to help others

The Family Friendly Partners Network helped our church families...

- Share their felt needs as to how the church can help them and where they want help
- Increased awareness about needs and made families intentional about educating children about Jesus
- Opened minds to the needs of different people and life situations

Events and Activities of Nebraska FFPN Churches

Nebraska Family Friendly Partner Network churches were asked to share events or activities their churches are doing because of their involvement in FFPN. Visit the FFPN website at www.familyfriendlypn.com to find contact information for each congregation if interested in learning more about these ideas.

The Paradigm Shift

- ✓ Established a Family Life Board and a part-time Family Life Ministry Director (Immanuel-Tilden)
- ✓ Teachers shared Paradigm Shift at parent/teacher conferences (St. John-Battle Creek)
- ✓ Paradigm Shift: “Repentance of the Church” sermon series (St. John-Battle Creek)
- ✓ Sounded the Alarm in worship and turning ocean liner around to be a home-centered, church-supported faith center (Good Shepherd-Fremont)

- ✓ Pastor held a sermon series on Sounding the Alarm (Peace-Grand Island)
- ✓ “Frogs Without Legs Can’t Hear” as Lenten evening series (Good Shepherd-Fremont)
- ✓ “Sound the Alarm” at Bible class and all church board meetings

Family Needs Survey: Felt Needs Assessment

- ✓ Church Survey/Assessment (St. John-Battle Creek)
- ✓ Conducted survey and presented results to congregation through newsletter, sermons, on screen, and related survey when started new classes (Peace-Grand Island)
- ✓ Families church wide survey and reviewed results with our network (Good Shepherd-Fremont)

Training Parents in Faith Formation

- ✓ “Letters from Dad” (St. Johns-Battle Creek)
- ✓ Children’s Christmas services with more focus on “Family friendly” and inclusive of all families (St. Johns-Battle Creek)
- ✓ Family Christmas Event incorporating specific children’s activities (Immanuel-Tilden)
- ✓ Implemented Do-votions (Christ-Norfolk)
- ✓ Parochial education night chapels so parents can attend (St. John-Battle Creek)
- ✓ “Bible Arrival” Summer 2008 (St. John-Battle Creek)
- ✓ Resurrection Eggs (St. John-Battle Creek)
- ✓ Parent involvement in Sunday School, VBS, and confirmation curriculum (St. John-Battle Creek)
- ✓ 3rd grade Bible class and child/parent from Stepping Stones (Peace-Grand Island)
- ✓ Do-votions with 135 families (Peace-Grand Island)
- ✓ We’ve begun Kingdom Quest Sunday School Curriculum which includes a work at home module with parents (Good Shepherd-Fremont)
- ✓ Sunday School Intergenerational Events during Advent and Lent: Craft, devotion, song in family group settings (Immanuel-Columbus)
- ✓ Family Movie Nights: devotion, meal, movie with family (Immanuel-Columbus)
- ✓ Bible Events: Read With Me, Hands On, etc. (Immanuel-Columbus)
- ✓ Baptismal parent and sponsor training (Immanuel-Columbus)
- ✓ Young adults/Young family fellowship (Immanuel-Columbus)
- ✓ Monthly Family Time (St. John-Battle Creek)
- ✓ Family Faith Formation, formerly called Confirmation, requires at least one parent to participate with students (Good Shepherd-Fremont)
- ✓ Confirmation classes incorporate parents and a meal (Immanuel-Tilden)
- ✓ Talked to school faculty asking teachers to give “homework” where students ask parents questions about Bible verses used as memory work. i.e.: “All things work together...” Romans 8:28 “When is a time something bad happened and God meant it for good?” We will keep replies in a folder

until child graduates from 8th grade and then send home with student.
(Christ-Norfolk)

Marriage Ministry

- ✓ “Love Language” in Sunday morning Bible study (St. Johns-Battle Creek)
- ✓ Recognizing anniversaries in church (Christ-Norfolk)
- ✓ Established marriage coordinators and composed a wedding manual (Immanuel-Tilden)
- ✓ Have monthly newsletter message encouraging marriages (Peace-Grand Island)
- ✓ Acknowledging anniversaries with gift (Peace-Grand Island)
- ✓ Revision of pre-marriage classes (Peace-Grand Island)
- ✓ Prepping for a Bible study using “Fireproof” materials (Peace-Grand Island)
- ✓ Women’s congregational afternoon retreat focused on marriage (Immanuel-Columbus)
- ✓ Couples getting married now attend Pre-Marriage Encounter with church paying half of fee (Good Shepherd-Fremont)
- ✓ Planning date night for couples (Christ-Norfolk)
- ✓ Planned and held a marriage retreat (Christ-Norfolk)

Parent Education

- ✓ Many members volunteer time and materials to the parenting classes and resources provided through the “Building Families Boutique” (Good Shepherd-Fremont)
- ✓ Offered parenting class called “From Me to We” (Good Shepherd-Fremont)
- ✓ Parenting: Plan to have team in place by Fall 2009 to train in “Me to We” (Peace-Grand Island)
- ✓ Family Reconciliation Training for congregational leaders—also introduced for the community (Immanuel-Tilden)
- ✓ Small group Bible studies established that integrate family topics (Immanuel-Tilden)
- ✓ Weekly “Bulletin Blurbs” that address family issues and provide a weekly family challenge (Immanuel-Tilden)

Human Sexuality

- ✓ Healthy Sexuality sermon series (St. John-Battle Creek)
- ✓ Using Passport to Purity
- ✓ Human Sexuality and Family Issues incorporated into Confirmation instruction (Immanuel-Tilden)

Non Nuclear Families

Congregational leaders had just received training in this area during Event 8 when asked to name their family friendly events and activities.